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June 8, 2009

To: Family Child Care Center Licensees
Group Child Care Center Licensees
Day Camp Licensees

BECR MEMO 2009-04

From: Jill D. Chase, Director 
Bureau of Early Care Regulation

RE: Transporting Children Safely

In order to prevent further tragedies like the recent death of an infant left in a vehicle and to ensure that all children are transported safely, the Department of Children and Families is in the process of reviewing the transportation requirements in the licensed child care rules.

Your licensing specialist will review your transportation procedures and monitor for compliance with the administrative rules in the coming months.

New Vehicle Alarm Legislation

In response to this recent tragedy and other incidents in which children were left in a vehicle, the legislature passed a bill that will require any vehicle owned or contracted for by a child care program that is used to transport children to have a vehicle safety alarm system. This requirement must be met for any vehicle with a passenger capacity of 6 or more people, regardless of how many children are being transported. The capacity of a vehicle is determined by the manufacturer.

The Department will be providing more information about the specifics of this legislation including a timeline for implementation and will be updating the licensing rules to incorporate this requirement. Other changes to the licensing rules related to transporting children may be made as well.

Current Requirements for Transporting Children

The current licensing rules apply to any transportation provided by a center whether the program owns the vehicles or uses contracted vehicles. The licensee is responsible for ensuring full compliance with the transportation licensing rules whether the center provides its own transportation services or it contracts with a transportation company.

DCF 250, DCF 251 and DCF 252 include the following requirements related to transportation policies and procedures:

- All licensed child care programs and day camps that transport children (or contract with a transportation company for the transport of children) on field trips, to or from school, or to or from home must have a policy on transporting children;
- The transportation policy must include a procedure to ensure that all children exit a vehicle after transportation;
- Programs must have a procedure to ensure that a caregiver knows the names, number and whereabouts of assigned children at all times. This means the driver of a vehicle used to transport children in care as well as staff who may be receiving a transported child for care must at all times account for children in care.
- If a child is absent without prior notification from the parent, the center is required to have a procedure to notify the parent or guardian that the child has not arrived as expected.

Review Your Current Transportation Procedures and Compliance with the Licensing Rules.

The department has developed a checklist of the rules that relate to transportation. A copy of this checklist is attached. Please review the items specified on the checklist to ensure the center's compliance with the licensing rules. Complete the checklist and return it to your licensing specialist no later than July 20, 2009. Licensing specialists will be reviewing the checklists and monitoring all centers for compliance with the transportation rules in the coming months.

Failure to meet all supervision and transportation rules that protect the health, safety and welfare of children in care may affect your ability to transport children and may result in sanctions and/or penalties up to, and including, revocation of your child care license.

Using 10+ Passenger Vans to Transport Children

While not all child care centers utilize a 10+ passenger van to transport children, all child care licensees must follow the safety risk reduction procedures issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration if these vans are used to transport children. These safety risk reduction procedures are available on the department's website:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed/pdf/pfs-4088.pdf>.

Memos available electronically

We encourage all child care licensees to sign up for the Bureau of Early Care Regulation list serve so that centers may receive communication via e-mail. Follow this link to sign up for the list serve: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/signup.htm>

Please contact your licensing specialist if you have any questions about any of the information in this memo. Thank you for your efforts to protect the health, safety and welfare of children in your care.

Attachment 1: [Transportation Rules Checklist – Day Camps](#)

Attachment 2: [Transportation Rules Checklist – Family Child Care Centers](#)

Attachment 3: [Transportation Rules Checklist – Group Child Care Centers](#)